

AMANDA HINSON

I recently moved away from Long Prairie because of the pollution in that town caused by lack of oversight on polluters and especially digesters. There should be no question-- methane digesters are not good for the environment, and there's no more air space for this in Long Prairie. I still work in Long Prairie, and almost every time I am there, the smell is horrid at the site of LP Packing where there is a feedlot and failed digester and downwind of the Central Bi Ponds where there is a failed digester and apparently also new one planned(?). While I commend the idea of recycling the manure, there requires way too many other pollutants and nuisances to create a digester that makes methane. If this is built on the SW side of the town, there will be no escaping this smell. While I know the digester at the ponds aren't the same as the one proposed at the Dairy Ridge, and odor could be contained, the fact is the two digesters in Long Prairie already failed. Failing digesters are bad for the environment and don't seem to be easily mitigated as we have already seen. The failed digester(s) caused my daughter to have headaches, throw up, and pass out multiple times. These caused me to have burning eyes and stuffed up sinuses where I started needing medication to treat the symptoms, and our doctor suggested we move. My family was seemingly constantly sick, and we lacked an appetite from the odor coming from the digester. We lived a mile away from the Central Bi ponds, but in town. I know people further away who said it bothers them. The town is suffering from the smell so much, businesses are shutting down. It was reported at a city meeting that new Long Prairie Packing workers aren't shopping in town due to the smell. What are the guarantees that this won't happen with another digester. Now that I live in Staples, I've met many people who gave me feedback about feeling like they will vomit as they drive through Long Prairie and how they try to avoid it altogether. People are leaving the campground next to the ponds and say they'll never come back. They aren't going to the Drive- In theater. This is an injustice to the town, the failure to enforce nuisance issues with the odor for decades while industries grow largely unchecked, the negligence of the businesses involved, and the fact that MPCA doesn't have a way to do much about the issue. Why then, do we start more of these polluters that can't be well mitigated, overseen, or actually regulated beyond some thousands of dollars for a fine or a permit? It feels like the town has gone to the cows, and perpetually so. Other cities don't have so many polluters like this. Long Prairie needs a break from the odor and problems caused by a digester. I hope that MPCA actually looks into the environmental impact on citizens before rubber stamping this. Now in Staples, our family enjoys the freedom of going outside most days for gardening, riding a bike, taking a walk, and being a normal family in the USA. MPCA should be working to bring that back to Long Prairie, not make it impossible from each end of town.

Sincerely,
Amanda Hinson